

To the Honorable Commissioners of the FCC,

Noam Chomsky, esteemed linguistics professor at MIT, has long been a critic of media consolidation. Chomsky once declared, "In a democracy, the ignorant and meddlesome outsiders, the general population, have to be kept from interfering. They can be spectators but not participants." Chomsky's theory rings true now more than any other time in history. Increasing media consolidation will not perpetuate democracy. It will only undermine it, while at the same time sustaining capitalism. This leads me to pose a question: If complete capitalism and free enterprise are to exist in a state, is true democracy possible?

We are living beyond the Information Age. Knowledge is power now more than ever. In the 2000 election, major media coverage hardly gave alternative party candidates, such as Ralph Nader, the voice they deserve and need in order for them and the rest of the American people to truly be participants of democracy in America. Ralph Nader was not even allowed to view any of the presidential debates as a spectator in the audience, let alone be able to participate (which he wasn't able to do because the Commission on Presidential Debates had raised the candidate minimum national poll support percentage from 5% to 15% for the 2000 election). To have a democracy, we need free elections. To have free elections, we the people need a choice. To have a choice, we need alternatives. For the majority of the American population to truly have alternatives to the two major parties in the United States, we need fair and equal coverage of the alternative candidates, so as not for the American people be deceived into believing that there are only two candidates for President. When, on Election Day, it comes time for the people to make their voices heard with their one and only one vote each, are our voices really being heard? Elections can not be democratic unless the voters participating are fully informed of each of their alternatives. I am fully aware that it is the citizen's own responsibility for their individual information, but when there are fewer and fewer easily accessible alternatives in broadcast news media to turn to (due to media conglomeration) for fair and diverse coverage, capitalism is devouring democracy.

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I am voicing my support to retain all the FCC rules in question. These rules set limits on concentration of the broadcast industry and serve the public interest by preserving diversity of ownership in the broadcast marketplace. These rules are; The Television-Radio Cross-Ownership Rule, The Broadcast-Newspaper Cross Ownership Ban, The National Television Ownership Rule, The Duopoly Rule for Radio, The Local Television Ownership Rule, and The Dual Network Rule.

As a concerned citizen of the United States of America, I feel I have a moral and patriotic obligation to fulfill. Patriotism - what does it mean? To many Americans, patriotism is synonymous with complacency. People are satisfied with the condition of our nation, hiding behind American flags and nationalism. "This is the freest country in the world!" many proudly proclaim. What they fail to recognize is that complacency is not what made the United States free. Complacency didn't start the American Revolution. Complacency didn't end slavery. Complacency did not win women the vote. Complacency did not break down the walls of segregation. Complacency did not end the Vietnam War. Each of these was accomplished through democratic participation by the people of the United States of America. Complacency is actually an enemy of democracy. This is why I am choosing to take this time to give you my opinion on the rules mentioned above and urge you to retain them. If the American people had always chosen to be complacent regarding matters of controversy, or any matters at all,

we as a nation would not be free, nor would we hold the status we hold today in the world.

Thus, I urge you all to carefully consider the matters at hand and I trust you will ultimately make a decision that will sustain democracy in the United States. I urge you to preserve the aforementioned rules. I am also aware that some of the abovementioned rules have previously been waived for certain corporations. Please also more heavily enforce the above rules, so as to ensure that all corporations the rules apply to abide by them, so as to ultimately sustain democracy.

Thank you,
Mike Merli
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